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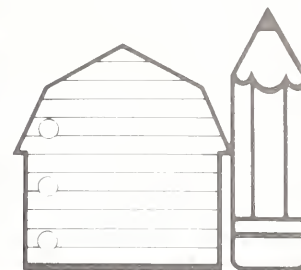
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Ag in the Classroom

Notes

United States
Department of
Agriculture



A bi-monthly newsletter for the Agriculture in the Classroom program. Sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture to help students understand the important role of agriculture in the United States economy. For information, contact: Shirley Traxler, Director, Room 317-A, Administration Bldg., USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-2200. 202/447-5727

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Vol. 6, No. 4

Outlook Conference: Agriculture in a World of Change

In the past year, there have been dramatic political and economic changes in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. How will this uncertain climate affect U.S. agriculture?

USDA's 67th annual Outlook Conference was designed to provide answers to that question. Called "Agriculture in a World of Change," the conference attracted more than 1,000 participants. In addition to individuals directly involved with agriculture, other participants included food and trade organizations and members of the diplomatic corps.

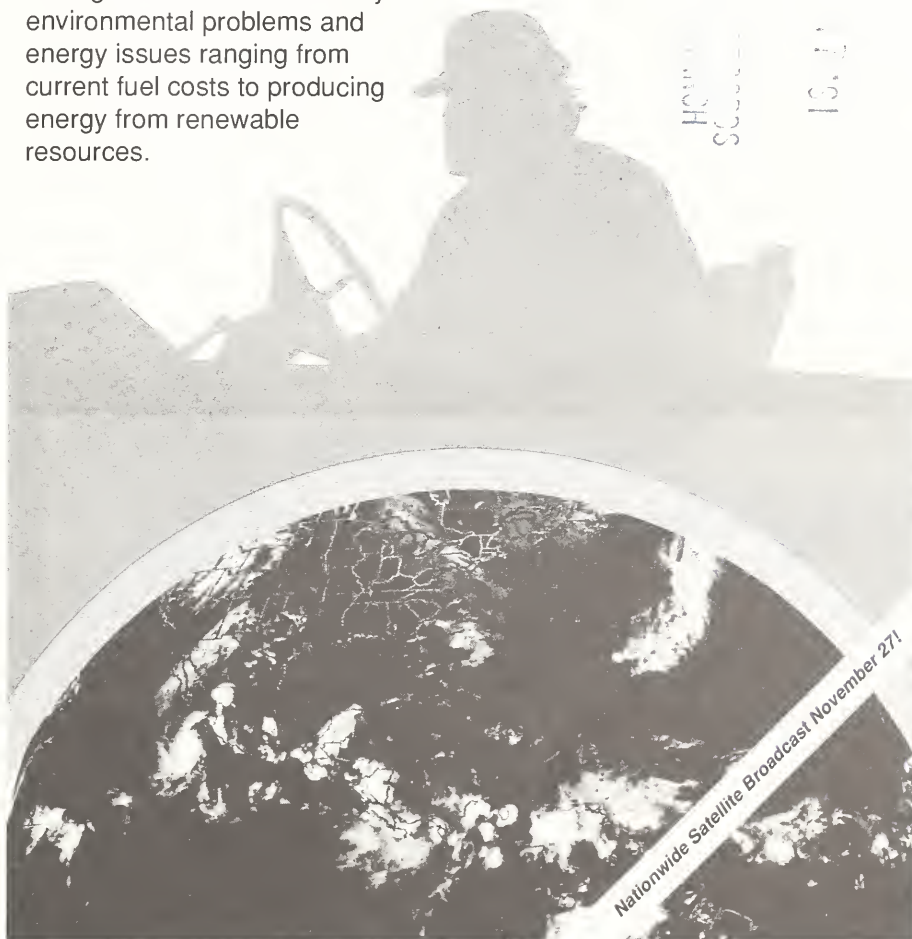
U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter delivered the keynote address in a plenary session that was broadcast nationwide on satellite. He gave current information on the foreign situation and discussed trade negotiations and changes in Europe and the Soviet Union. Other presenters, including ambassadors from Eastern and Western Europe, discussed the likely impact of these developments on the U.S. economy, agricultural trade, and the outlook for farmers and consumers.

During the conference, some of the nation's leading analysts discussed prospects for farmers, agribusiness, and consumers in 1991. Some sessions focused on the outlook for specific commodities. For the first time this year, floriculture and ornamental horticulture were included as part of the conference.

In other sessions, participants focused on more general topics, ranging from the impact of the Soviet transportation system on U.S. farm imports to how the new Dietary Guidelines and

consumers' food knowledge will affect food consumption.

The conference concluded with plenary sessions on two vital topics: progress in finding solutions to food safety and environmental problems and energy issues ranging from current fuel costs to producing energy from renewable resources.



Teachers Can Count on These AG Census Lesson Plans

Lesson Plans

The Census of Agriculture



Which two states have the most land in orchards? How much of the food cost in a supermarket actually goes to the farmer? Which state has the largest number of farmers?

Answers to these questions—and thousands more—are contained in the 1987 Census of Agriculture. Although there is a wealth of data in the Census, many teachers—and even more students—do not know how to find or use it.

The U.S. Bureau of the Census has developed a package of free teaching materials to help teachers and students learn about the census of agriculture. The package is designed especially for high school students, but can be adapted for junior high or upper elementary grades. It includes four lessons and supporting materials covering these topics:

- Introduction to Agriculture and the Agriculture Census

- Production Agriculture
- Agribusiness
- The Effect of Agriculture on Community Characteristics

The teaching package gives students a chance to collect data from primary sources—using actual Agriculture Census tables and graphs to find the answers to questions. It introduces information about U.S. geography. Finally, it requires students to use simple mathematics in realistic applications. The lesson plans could be used in social studies, economics, or math courses.

Although the packaged lessons included only U.S. data, teachers can request a one-page summary (called an Advance Report) of information about their county and state when they write for the lesson plans.

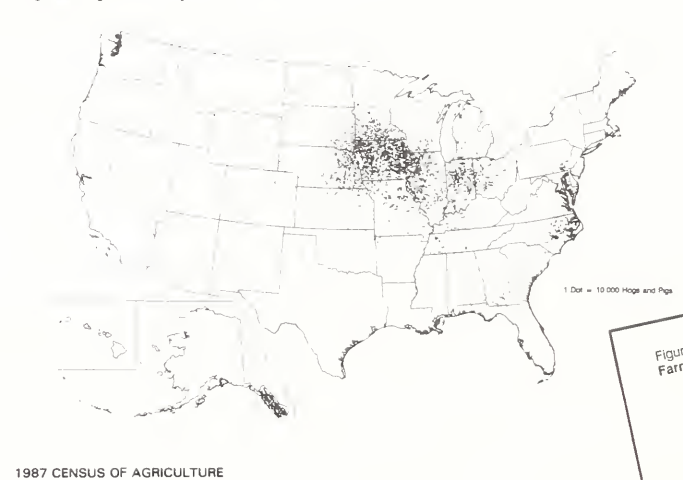
To receive the four lesson plans on the Agriculture Census, write:

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Table 3. Farm Production Expenses: 1987, 1982, and 1978
(Data are based on a sample of farms; see text. For meaning of abbreviations and symbols, see introductory text.)

Item	1987	1982	1978
Total farm production expenses	2 087 734	1 086 138	51 797
Average per farm	807 105	423 024	2 024
Farms with expenses of—			
\$1 to \$4,999	188 418	1 703 024	2 582 016
\$5,000 to \$9,999	224 801	2 277 867	8 498 921
\$10,000 to \$24,999	80 221	14 412 562	22 002 983
\$25,000 to \$49,999	42 438	38 829 278	19 344 942
\$50,000 to \$99,999	25 831	17 9	17 9
\$100,000 to \$249,999	17 914	19 163	19 163
\$250,000 or more	1 180 744	197 229	844 841
Livestock and poultry purchased	875 872	465 862	572 038
Farms with expenses of—			
\$1 to \$4,999	188 418	1 703 024	2 582 016
\$5,000 to \$9,999	224 801	2 277 867	8 498 921
\$10,000 to \$24,999	80 221	14 412 562	22 002 983
\$25,000 to \$49,999	42 438	38 829 278	19 344 942
\$50,000 to \$99,999	25 831	17 9	17 9
\$100,000 to \$249,999	17 914	19 163	19 163
\$250,000 or more	1 180 744	197 229	844 841
Feed for livestock and poultry	480 045	1 748 508	1 529 866
Farms with expenses of—			
\$1 to \$4,999	188 418	1 703 024	2 582 016
\$5,000 to \$9,999	224 801	2 277 867	8 498 921
\$10,000 to \$24,999	80 221	14 412 562	22 002 983
\$25,000 to \$49,999	42 438	38 829 278	19 344 942
\$50,000 to \$99,999	25 831	17 9	17 9
\$100,000 to \$249,999	17 914	19 163	19 163
\$250,000 or more	1 180 744	197 229	844 841

Figure 8.
Hogs and Pigs—Inventory



1987 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

Table 25. Cattle and Calves—Inventory: 1987 and 1982

(For meaning of abbreviations and symbols, see introductory text.)

Item	1987	1982
Cattle and calves	1 178 348	95 847 299
Farms with—		
1 to 9	212 847	1 132 157
10 to 19	208 563	2 899 513
20 to 49	326 768	10 275 635
50 to 99	208 810	14 412 562
100 to 199	130 327	17 487 300
200 to 499	88 023	18 121 871
500 to 999	14 804	9 881 986
1,000 to 2,499	5 648	6 043 581
2,500 or more	1 736	12 583 064
Cows and heifers that had calved	967 879	41 737 290
Farms with—		
1 to 9	252 565	1 365 749
10 to 19	207 533	2 836 482
20 to 49	298 980	8 393 980
50 to 99	135 744	9 002 077
100 to 199	85 463	7 216 251
200 to 499	23 292	6 580 417
500 to 999	4 428	2 884 008
1,000 or more	1 815	2 978 325
Beef cows	841 778	31 652 593
Farms with—		
1 to 9	266 960	1 318 423
10 to 19	195 899	2 881 281
20 to 49	225 998	6 782 562
50 to 99	87 551	5 823 407
100 to 199	39 754	5 189 789
200 to 499	18 877	5 258 838
500 to 999	3 463	2 241 057
1,000 or more	1 248	2 377 218
Milk cows	202 068	10 084 697
Farms with—		
1 to 9	42 384	70 288
10 to 19	7 488	48 904
20 to 49	38 002	107 300
50 to 99	47 628	1 521 875
100 to 199	48 817	3 173 173
200 to 499	14 836	1 886 818
500 or more	2 453	1 187 307
Heifers and heifer calves	895 535	26 379 481
Steen, steer calves, bulls, and bull calves	963 968	27 730 528

Students use actual Census Bureau information to find the answers to questions

Figure 8.
Farms with

New Jersey Guide Lists AG's "Human Resources"

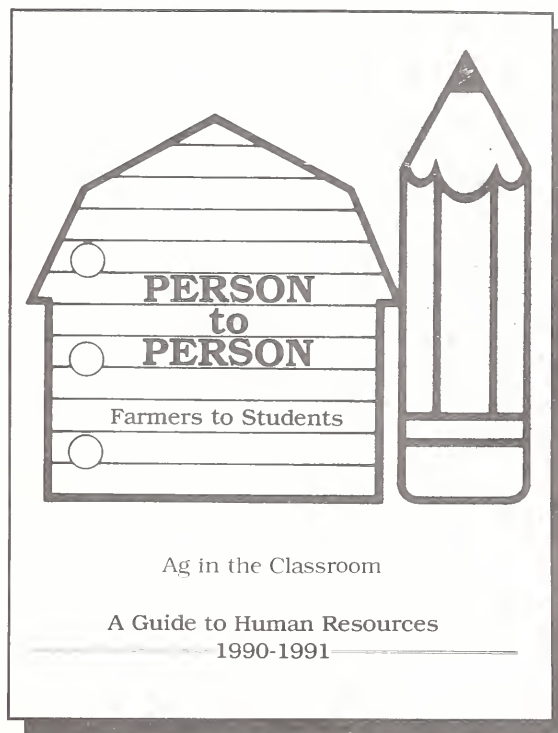
Suppose you're a teacher in suburban Bergen County, New Jersey, who wants to take your students on a field trip to a nearby farm. Where can you find a list of nearby farmers who would welcome your 30 fourth graders?

Thanks to New Jersey's AITC program, all you need is a copy of a new publication called Person to Person: Farmers to Students. The book is described as a "guide to human resources," bringing together farmers and students to provide firsthand learning experiences about the local farm community.

This is the fourth revision of the book since its first publication in 1984. "Initially," says Cindy Effron, state contact for AITC in New Jersey and one of the editors of the book, "we just published a list of farmers who would speak to classes." But today, the book includes a wealth of other information about ways teachers can bring agriculture into their classrooms.

A section of the book called "Setting the Scene" outlines everything a teacher needs to do to set up a field trip or a classroom visit by a farmer. "That information came from a workshop we held with farmers on how to make farm visits an educational experience," says Effron. The book also provides a list of classroom resources, organizations with agriculture-related programs or materials, and a listing of the state's living history farms.

A list of all the Extension agents in each county is included. "Teachers can learn a lot from the 4-H Agent and the Home Economist—as well as the

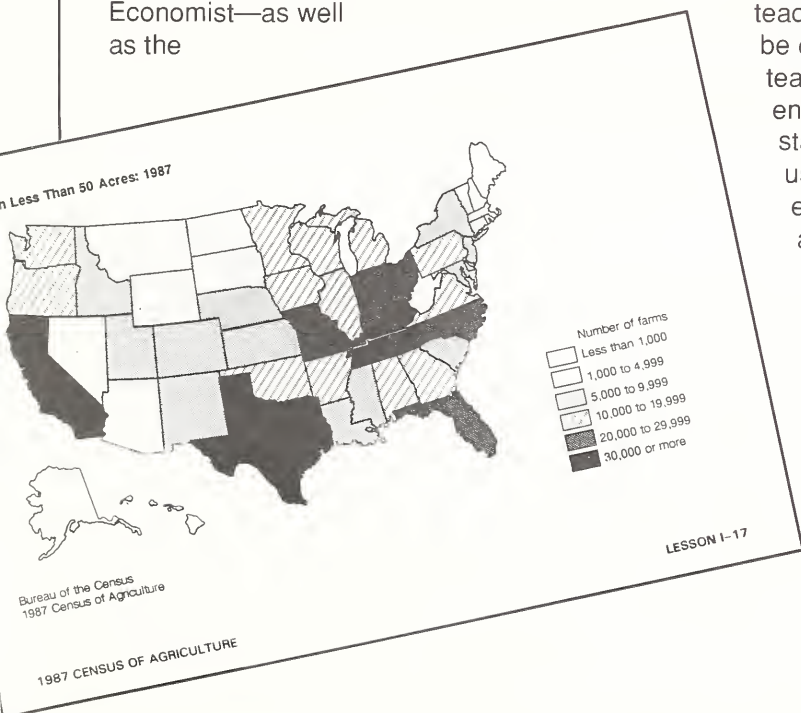


County Agricultural Agent," Effron says.

The book was distributed at the New Jersey Education Association conference. "Teachers were six deep around our booth," Effron says. "They are just clamoring for information like this."

Helping teachers set up student tours is only one of the facets of New Jersey AITC. The program also sponsors teacher tours, which have already attracted more than 1,000 teachers statewide. The tours have proved to be especially valuable in introducing city teachers, who often have no firsthand experience, to the importance of agriculture in the state. "We've had middle aged teachers tell us that the farm tour was the first time they ever had a chance to pick an apple or touch a sheep," says Effron. "This year, several teachers brought home ears of corn and pieces of wool for show-and-tell with their students."

Both the teachers who have used the guide and the farmers who are listed as resources give the book high marks. "It seems to meet a need for everyone involved," Effron says.



**Agriculture
Keeps
New Jersey
Green**

In Illinois, Science + Agriculture = Good Chemistry

An Illinois Educational Service Center was looking for workshops that could give teachers new ideas for teaching science in the classroom. The Illinois Ag in the Classroom program was searching for ways to get materials into teachers' hands. So it was natural that Pat Williamson, who serves on the governing board of the agency and is also acting as a district coordinator for AITC in Illinois came up with the idea of having the Educational Service Center sponsor a workshop on agriculture.

"Nearly every aspect of agriculture is related to science," Williamson says, "so it was easy to make the connection."

Ellen Culver, state contact for Illinois AITC, agrees. "Agricultural science can incorporate anything from plants to animals to the environment," she says.

Williamson showed samples of the educational materials developed for AITC programs to the regional superintendent. "Once she saw the high quality of the materials available, she was convinced that agriculture should be included in the grant."

Eventually, the center received a \$160,000 grant from the state to promote scientific literacy. And Williamson was asked to put together an ag workshop. She spent several months gathering all the free teaching materials she could find. It turned out to be exactly what teachers were looking for. The 35 teachers from 23 districts who attended not only snapped up ideas, but also took home more than 500 pounds of materials.

"When we got to the room where we were serving lunch," says Williamson, "we noticed that many teachers had simply disappeared. They had stayed behind to gather up all the material they could—they told us they didn't want to miss out on a single bit."

Williamson believes that working through an agency like the Educational Service Center increases credibility with teachers. "Teachers want to talk with other teachers," she says. She sees another benefit as well. "When you ask volunteers to deliver materials to schools, they may or may not get to the right person. But we know that the teachers who attended this workshop are interested in teaching about agriculture and will put the materials to good use."

Rose Mary Shepherd, regional superintendent administrative agent, agrees. "We're trying to improve instruction in the classroom at the grassroots," she said. "The grassroots is as near as you can get to agriculture."



Teachers at an Illinois workshop gathered a wealth of material on how to use agriculture to teach science



USDA Publication Takes The Mystery Out of Calories



Whether you're a person who wants to know the exact number of calories in everything you eat ... or someone who isn't exactly sure what a calorie is ... you'll find answers in a new USDA publication.

Called "Calories & Weight: The USDA Pocket Guide," this new guide includes calorie values for nearly 400 foods in everyday serving sizes. It also offers suggestions on how to eat sensibly while you're watching your calories.

Recent studies indicate that one of every four Americans is overweight. And despite all those ads that promote miracle diets, people who want to lose weight must consume fewer calories than they expend. "This pocket sized calorie guide is an excellent tool for consumers trying to control calorie intake, said Sue Ann Ritchko, administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Human Nutrition Information Service. "It can be used when planning

menus. And because of its handy size, it can be taken along when shopping or eating out.

Ritchko explained that "Calories & Weight" is part of a USDA campaign called "Eating Right...The Dietary Guidelines Way." This continuing effort is designed to increase public awareness of the dietary guidelines for Americans and to help people put the guidelines into practice. The dietary guidelines are seven principles that reflect recommendations by the nation's top diet and health authorities. "Maintain Desirable Weight" is one of the seven guidelines.

What is your desirable weight? "Calories & Weight" contains a chart to help you determine the right weight for you. (Of course, a quick look in the mirror or a pinch of the upper arm can give you a good indication of whether your weight is desirable!)

The guide also offers some tips on successful dieting. They include:

- Be suspicious of a diet that promises wonders. Whatever diet you follow, it should contain a balance of foods from the major food groups: breads and other grain products; fruits; vegetables; meat, poultry, fish and alternates; and milk, yogurt, and cheese. Don't leave out any food group. The pocket guide's organization will help you compare the calorie levels of foods in each food group and to balance selections among different groups.
- It's easier to lose it if you "move it."
Increasing physical activity increases the number of calories used and improves overall fitness as you lose weight.

"Calories & Weight" is available from the Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, Colo. 81009. Be sure to specify Item No. 178-W on your envelope and include a check or money order for \$1.75, payable to the Superintendent of Documents.



You Could Look it Up



U.S. agriculture is more efficient and effective than ever. One U.S. farmer now provides 128 people with food and fiber—up from 123 a year ago. That U.S. farmer would serve 94 people in the U.S. and 34 abroad.



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The individuals listed here are key reference persons in each state. If you have any questions, want to make reports, or need more information about your state's Ag in the Classroom program, contact the following:

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